

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

EUGENE COLIS,

Plaintiff,

v.

RONALD E. WATSON, *et al.*,

Defendants.

Case No. 1:23-cv-01578-KES-EPG (PC)

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
TO DISMISS THIS ACTION WITHOUT
PREJUDICE FOR FAILURE TO PROSECUTE
AND FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH COURT'S
ORDERS

OBJECTIONS, IF ANY,
DUE WITHIN 30 DAYS

Plaintiff Eugene Colis is confined at the Tuolumne County Jail and he is proceeding *pro se* and *in forma pauperis* in this civil rights action filed pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1983. For reasons stated below, the Court recommends that this case be dismissed without prejudice for failure to prosecute.

I. BACKGROUND

Plaintiff filed the Complaint commencing this action on November 8, 2023. (ECF No. 1). Plaintiff alleged that police officers used excessive force when they arrested him, and that jail officials denied him a complaint form. (*See generally* ECF No. 1). The Court has screened the complaint and on March 26, 2024, issued a screening order holding that Plaintiff failed to state any cognizable claims. (ECF No. 12). The Court gave Plaintiff 30 days to either file an amended complaint or file a statement with the Court that he wants to stand on his original complaint. (*Id.* at 11). The Court advised Plaintiff that, if he chooses to stand on the filed

1 complaint, the Court would issue “findings and recommendations to a district judge
2 recommending dismissal of the action” consistent with the Court’s screening order. (*Id.* at 10).
3 Finally, the Court has warned the Plaintiff that “Failure to comply with this order may result in
4 the dismissal of this action.” (ECF No. 12 at 11; *see also* ECF No. 3 at 1 (warning Plaintiff that
5 failure to follow the Court’s orders and all applicable rules “will be grounds for imposition of
6 sanctions which may include dismissal of the case.”))

7 The deadline to respond to the Court’s screening order has now passed, and Plaintiff has
8 not filed an amended complaint or a statement with the Court that he wishes to proceed on his
9 original complaint, or otherwise communicated with the Court.

10 **II. LEGAL STANDARDS**

11 Under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 41(b), a court may dismiss an action for failure
12 to comply with court orders and to prosecute. In determining whether to dismiss an action
13 under Rule 41(b) for failure to prosecute or failure to comply with a Court order, “the Court
14 must weigh the following factors: (1) the public’s interest in expeditious resolution of
15 litigation; (2) the court’s need to manage its docket; (3) the risk of prejudice to
16 defendants/respondents; (4) the availability of less drastic alternatives; and (5) the public policy
17 favoring disposition of cases on their merits.” *Pagtalunan v. Galaza*, 291 F.3d 639, 642 (9th
18 Cir. 2002) (citing *Ferdik v. Bonzelet*, 963 F.2d 1258, 1260–61 (9th Cir. 1992)).

19 **III. ANALYSIS**

20 In applying the *Pagtalunan* factors to this case, the first factor weighs in favor of
21 dismissal, because “[t]he public’s interest in expeditious resolution of litigation always favors
22 dismissal.” *Id.* (quoting *Yourish v. California Amplifier*, 191 F.3d 983, 990 (9th Cir. 1999)
23 (internal quotation marks omitted).

24 As to the second factor, the Court’s need to manage its docket, “[t]he trial judge is in
25 the best position to determine whether the delay in a particular case interferes with docket
26 management and the public interest.” *Id.* Here, Plaintiff has failed to file an amended complaint
27 or otherwise notify the Court that he wants to stand on his complaint as required by a court
28 order. Allowing this case to proceed further without any indication that Plaintiff intends to

1 prosecute his case is a waste of judicial resources. *See Hall v. San Joaquin County Jail*, No.
2 2:13-cv-0324 AC P, 2018 WL 4352909, at *2 (E.D. Cal. Sept. 12, 2018) (“The court will not
3 continue to drag out these proceedings when it appears that plaintiffs have no intention of
4 diligently pursuing this case.”). Therefore, the second factor weighs in favor of dismissal.

5 Turning to the third *Pagtalunan* factor, risk of prejudice to Defendants, “pendency of a
6 lawsuit is not sufficiently prejudicial in and of itself to warrant dismissal.” *Pagtalunan*, 291
7 F.3d at 642 (citing *Yourish*, 191 F.3d at 991). However, “delay inherently increases the risk that
8 witnesses’ memories will fade and evidence will become stale,” *id.* at 643, and it is Plaintiff’s
9 failure to comply with a court order that is causing delay and preventing this case from
10 progressing. Therefore, the third factor weighs in favor of dismissal.

11 As for the availability of lesser sanctions, the fourth *Pagtalunan* factor, at this stage in
12 the proceedings there is little available to the Court which would constitute a satisfactory lesser
13 sanction while protecting the Court from further unnecessary expenditure of its scarce
14 resources. Monetary sanctions are of little use, considering Plaintiff’s incarceration and *in*
15 *forma pauperis* status. (See ECF Nos. 9, 10). And, given the stage of these proceedings, the
16 preclusion of evidence or witnesses is not available. Moreover, dismissal *without* prejudice *is*
17 the lesser sanction available to the Court. Under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 41(b), a court
18 may dismiss an action *with* prejudice for failure to comply with court orders and to prosecute.
19 Fed. R. Civ. P. (41)(b); *see also Link v. Wabash R. Co.*, 370 U.S. 626, 630–31 (1962) (holding
20 that Rule 41(b) allows *sua sponte* dismissal by the Court because “[t]he authority of a court to
21 dismiss *sua sponte* for lack of prosecution has generally been considered an ‘inherent power,’
22 governed not by rule or statute but by the control necessarily vested in courts to manage their
23 own affairs so as to achieve the orderly and expeditious disposition of cases.”) Therefore, the
24 fourth factor also weighs in favor of dismissal.

25 Finally, because public policy favors disposition on the merits, this factor weighs
26 against dismissal. *Pagtalunan*, 291 F.3d at 643.

IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

After weighing the factors, the Court finds that dismissal without prejudice is appropriate.

Accordingly, the Court **RECOMMENDS** that:

1. This action be dismissed without prejudice under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 41(b) for failure to prosecute and failure to follow Court's orders; and
2. The Clerk of Court be directed to close this case.

These findings and recommendations will be submitted to the United States district judge assigned to the case, pursuant to the provisions of Title 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1). Within thirty days after being served with these findings and recommendations, Plaintiff may file written objections with the Court. The document should be captioned “Objections to Magistrate Judge’s Findings and Recommendations.” Plaintiff is advised that failure to file objections within the specified time may result in the waiver of rights on appeal. *Wilkerson v. Wheeler*, 772 F.3d 834, 838–39 (9th Cir. 2014) (citing *Baxter v. Sullivan*, 923 F.2d 1391, 1394 (9th Cir. 1991)).

IT IS SO ORDERED.

Dated: May 9, 2024

/s/ Eric P. Groj
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE